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PHINEAS
PINKHAM
howl

CRASH ON DELIVERY

written and illustrated by
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“Gimme this an’ gimme that!” Yes, it seemed that everybody in the sector had the “gimme’s.” Jacques le Bouillon wanted marks, a slew of tough doughs wanted francs, Hauptmann von Katzenjammer wanted his pay, and Colonel McWhinney wanted satisfaction. Outside of that, everything was peaceful—except that the M.P.’s wanted Phineas!

THIS IS A STORY of high finance as well as high flying. It never would have been written if a couple of Yankee doughs had not found a cache of Jerry marks in a deserted *abri* near Vaubecourt.

You see, a year before Uncle Sam peeled off his coat and spat on his hands to take a poke at Kaiser Bill, the Frog *poilus* had chased the Heinies out of

the aforementioned Frog hamlet. And the Jerry brass hats, evidently very hard pressed, were satisfied to escape with even their skivvies. They left behind them a Boche paymaster and payroll buried in a mass of debris.

The doughs who stumbled over this treasure left the Heinie paymaster where they found him—because he was no longer fit for circulation—but the marks,

having escaped the blast of shells, soon began to circulate throughout France; and thereupon reports hit Chaumont to the effect that a flock of Yanks, the majority of whom had failed to pass an intelligence test, had purchased the Kraut legal tender at various places and had paid for it with honest-to-goodness French and American currency.

Outside Bar-le-Duc, in the Frog farmhouse which served as headquarters for the Ninth Pursuit Squadron, Major Rufus Garrity was hearing the lowdown on these Yankee financial geniuses from a colonel who was tarrying over business so that both he and his official automobile could take on liquid refreshments.

"Yes sir, Garrity," the brass hat prated, "these doughs have been selling the marks at prices that are outrageous. They tell the dumb guys they pick out for customers that they will be in Germany before long and that they will need marks and plenty of 'em. So they give 'em about twenty marks for ten francs. That's robbery!

"What's more, they will also be charged with confiscating Allied property and the sticking up of Boche prisoners. They'll get the jug for it—those doughs. But we'll grab 'em all right. The Intelligence Corps is on their tails right now and expects to round 'em up in no time. Damndest thing I ever heard, Garrity."

"Why the dirty crooks!" Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham horned in indignantly. "Why them doughs will be lousy with Frog dough before they know it. How do guys get so lucky, huh?"

"They won't be so lucky when they get thrown into a klink for twenty years," Garrity clipped. "How much do you think they got out of that old dugout, Colonel?"

"Well, it's a safe bet that they found at least eighty thousand marks," the brass hat came back. "They sell 'em forty thousand francs and—that's some profit!"

"Ain't that just my luck?" Phineas complained. "I have pancaked in about three different trenches since I've been over here and I never hit that one where the marks were. I never was lucky. I took a dozen chances on an egg beater at a ladies' aid supper once back in Boonetown and my Aunt Isora only took one—and she won it! And all them dumb doughs ready to pay two francs for—haw-w-w-w-w! It is awful what they don't know about foreign exchanges, ain't it, Colonel?"

"Ah—er—Garrity," the braided, bay-windowed high officer said testily, "I came in to have a quiet chat

with you. This Pinkham fellow—hasn't he any idea of discipline or respect for his superior officers? Do they all walk over you like this, Major? I want the man out of here! I have other matters to discuss that are none of his affair. Hmph! Hmm!" he blustered.

The Old Man turned on Phineas. "Get out of here," he exploded. "Who do you think you are? Coming in like this and—"

"Napoleon," Phineas said promptly. "But nobody will believe me, haw-w-w-w-w!" Then shaking his head, the Boonetown nuisance went out. "Huh, I would like to meet up with them doughs. Boys!"

EVEN so, the brass hat had been somewhat careless with the truth, though it would not be polite to call him a liar. In the presence of Phineas Pinkham he had told Garrity that what he had to say was not a pilot's business. But after he was gone, the Spad flyers of the Ninth found out that every last one of them fitted into the word picture that the Colonel had painted.

"Why the big bum!" Phineas snorted when the C.O. enlightened them as to the orders that had come from the Wing. "Bat flyin' he wants, huh? Awright, see if it bothers me. You heard what he said—that it wasn't none of my affair. That lets me out. I got a witness, haw! It's you, Major! The brass hats sure are a panic. They are like the managers of the pugs who say 'Go out an' slug, kid. He can't hurt us!'"

"Are you all through?" Garrity inquired with a pent-in restraint that sent his blood pressure up to the explosion point. "Well, in just twenty minutes you take the first hop over the lines, Mr. Pinkham. How do you like that for apples, you freckled-faced baboon?"

"I always do my duty," Phineas retorted loftily. "A Pinkham never questions orders. No sir! I will find out why the Heinies are tryin' to land a crate behind the lines near Souilly—as well as knock any of them knock-kneed who try it. If a very young Jerry spy is waiting to get picked up, he will have hardenin' of the arteries and no teeth by the time it happens. I will solve the mystery, Major. Watson, my violin! I feel like a bar or two of Choppin before I get in the mood."

"Yes," Garrity cracked, ignoring Phineas, "a Hun ship was seen in the vicinity of Souilly three nights ago. It was flying low, heading for Germany, and it may have dropped a spy for some reason or another. If they did drop one, they'll have to pick him up. That's logic."

"Haw-w-w-w-w! I dropped a dame once," Phineas chortled. "She is still where I tossed her, for all of me. It is not sense. Well, adoo, bums. I go—but I will be back,

cur-r-r-rses! The next time I will git the mortgage, haw-w-w-w!"

"I will do it yet," the Old Man kept yelling even after Phineas had taken a Spad off the tarmac and was flying toward the muttering lines. "I will kill him! I will take the consequences with pleasure. I can stand just so much! I can—I'll—*Cr-r-ripes!*"

NOW over in Alsace-Lorraine, in a Heinie stronghold, a monocled *Herr Oberst* was pawing the dew of concern from a brow that was as wide as a garden gate. "*Ach, mein Herrs,*" he gutturalled wearily, "*der Marks ve moost haben. Already yedt der Marks dey ben lower by der Cherman Banken. Der troops by der groundt vill lizzen vhen der promise cooms, but der flying Offiziers, ach, smardter yedt dey ist, hein? Ein, drei Staffels dey say dey moost get der back pay—oddervise dey dondt fly! Und Staffel Noomber Sieben ist der besser by der front. Ach, der Dumkopfs know der Marks ve moost haff zo ve buy der bullets mit shells to shooldt, und yedt der Marks dey vant alzo! Donnervetter, first der Marks und den der Vaterland. Idt vas like dis nefer by 1870!*"

"*Nein, nein,*" a bespectacled Junker shook his head mournfully. "But don't haff *der* vorry, *Herr Oberst*. I haff *der Marks* in *zwei, drei Tags*, you see. Ofer *der* lines *ist* vun Frenchman—zo agent K-4 he giifs me *der* vord—und *der* Frenchman he helps *der* Kaiser efen if he does nodd vant to. Enough Marks he has, *mein Freunds*, to pay idt *der* Fokker und Albatros flyers, *ja* I look for *der* vord from K-4 any minute, *Herr Oberst.*"

"*Gut!* You gedt idt *der Marks*, *Kapitan Schlushwig*, und it giifs some of dem to you alzo, *ja.*"

NIGHT flying was not considered good for the health in the days of the Big Fuss. That was before we had radio beams and robot pilots. All a man like Phineas Pinkham had were a stick, two Vickers guns, and a prayer.

And now the flyer from Iowa was cruising high over the heads of both armies, his eyes trying to spot the telltale fiery phlegm of a snooping Hun's exhaust.

"They are very stingy with the moonlight, *ce soir,*" Phineas muttered. "If the Heinies hadn't tried to kiss me twice with archie, I would swear it was Scotland I was flyin' over. Huh," he mused, "all that Kraut dough and me not gettin' a smell. I could get even a better price for them marks, I bet, if they was mine. I could make enough to buy that pool room up over the Greek restaurant back home in Boonetown. I

could even buy a flivver an'—oh yeah? Sneak over, will ya, ya squareheaded Boche!" He kicked right rudder, described a semicircle in the murk, and booted his Spad toward a higher sky shelf. The drone of a Mercedes power plant had trickled through his leather helmet and had seeped into his big sound detectors than which there were none larger in all France.

Phineas had picked himself a tartar. He found that out after he banked, dropped down on the nocturnal Kraut, and missed with a couple of bursts. The Boche crate seemed capable of doing as many tricks as a wasp when it finally got down to business.

"It's a lie," the lone Yank gulped. "Nothin' can fly like that. I am asleep in my hut, or somethin'. Bump, wake me up, you bum, before I get killed. Ow-w-w-w-w!" A tracer bullet streaked the length of the Spad's top wing and the smell of burning dope stung Phineas Pinkham's nostrils.

Spandau slugs took bites out of the Spad's shortribs, singed its scalp, and played havoc with it in general from prop boss to tail skid. Phineas managed to get down to five hundred feet, then the Hiss sat down and demanded shorter hours and more gas. There was no way out of the mess but straight down, so the quaking pilot let his Spad pick its own landing field while he closed his eyes and speculated as to whether his next C.O. would wear horns or big white wings.

BLOOEY! Phineas had his safety strap unhooked and was half out of the pit when the fifteen thousand dollar Yank investment went into the red amidst the green branches of a Frog tree. The Boonetown bat flyer woke up ten minutes later with his face in a bird's nest. His prop boss had ruined the careers of four feathered creatures before they had even gotten a good start in life. The aroma-de-egg brought the Yank back to consciousness whereupon he got his legs and arms untangled carefully and started to lower his bruised fuselage down through the branches.

"Ugh!" he sniffled. "I am sure glad it was not an ostrich's domicile that I broke up."

Once on terra firma, Phineas looked around him. Not fifty yards away he made out the outlines of a big Frog chateau. A single light was burning in a window and toward that haven Lieutenant Pinkham limped, hoping that somebody had left a snack or two in the ice box. When he walked up the big stone steps he saw that part of the place had been bitten out by a hungry shell and he wondered what manner of Frog citizen dared hold his ground so near the palpating lines.

In response to Phineas' loud pounding accompanied by his loud yip—"Who is in cliez *maison*? Annybodee *dans ze chateau, oui*?"—the door finally opened. A nondescript individual with a long white beard that brushed off his shoes as he walked, peered out at the Yankee pilot. Phineas thought that by comparison to this old Frog, Rip Van Winkle should have worn rompers.

"Bong sour," he chirped to the hermit. "It is succor I want." To himself he muttered, "I hope he is one, haw-w-w-w!"

"*Entrez*," squeaked the bewhiskered Frog. "*Vous avez ze marks, hein*?" He rubbed his bony hands together like a miser who has found a stray nickel.

"Marks?" Phineas gulped. "Why—er—*oui oui*! I have eet some. Brand new ones that—er—Heinie treasury just issued. Bet you never saw 'em before. Uh—er—you read it ze Engleesh, mawn amy?"

"*Mais non*. I only speek a bit of *Anglais, oui*. But ze marks. I geeve ze francs for zem. Come, *mon ami*."

Phineas followed the aged Frenchman into a big room that was half smothered with cobwebs. The windows had been boarded up and only a single candle burned on a large table. Where the light was none too good, Phineas dug down into his pockets for a small bunch of greenish certificates and tossed them out.

"*Sacre!*" exclaimed his host. "*Mes yeux*—my eyes, zey are not *tres bon*," he went on, "*mais* thees eez ze *argent*, I know. By ze feel of ze pa-pair—"

"*Oui, sure*," Phineas hastened to say. "It took me a year of smokes to save—er—I mean I had to stop smokin' so's I could save the dough—*argent*—up, haw-w-w-w! For ten francs it's *votre* sugar, mawn amy. Listen, monsoor, why ees you save ze Kraut money, *non*?"

"*Pourquoi*?" the ancient Frog wheezed. "Jacques le Bouillon, he do not mak' eet ze same mistake *deux temps, non*." He shook his head from side to side as he went on. "In 1870 I thenk ees ze French who win ze *guerre* an' I buy zem all ze francs. But ze Germans zey win! Now I thenk ze Germans win ze *guerre aussi*—so eet ees ze marks I buy."

"Battier than a belfry," Phineas muttered to himself. Then to Le Bouillon: "That's smart, monsoor, haw-w-w-w! *Vous avez ze beaucoup* francs, huh?"

"*Mais oui*, I have ze barrel fill' up, *oui*. I buy heem all marks I can. Hark, *mon ami*! Ze guns, ze Boche guns zey geet moch near all ze time, *oui*? *Sacre*, I go'n be *tres rich homme*."

"Ah—er well, I must be gettin' home now," Phineas stammered, his brain doing spirals. "I am ze Lieutenant Pinkham an' have eet ze airdrome to find encore. Adoo for now, grampa. I weel geet eet more marks *pour vous*. Bong swore!"

"*Vous breeng*, I buy, *merci*," cackled the old Frog, showing Phineas to the door.

THE pilot from Boonetown now wended his way in the general direction of Bar-le-Duc. But three quarters of a mile of pounding his puppies against the rough terra firma of France was enough for Phineas. And so he tried for a lift, but an assortment of Yankee rolling stock passed him by without a tumble. Deeply depressed by this lack of consideration, he seated himself by the roadside near Triauecourt and set about getting his cerebrum and cerebellum unscrambled.

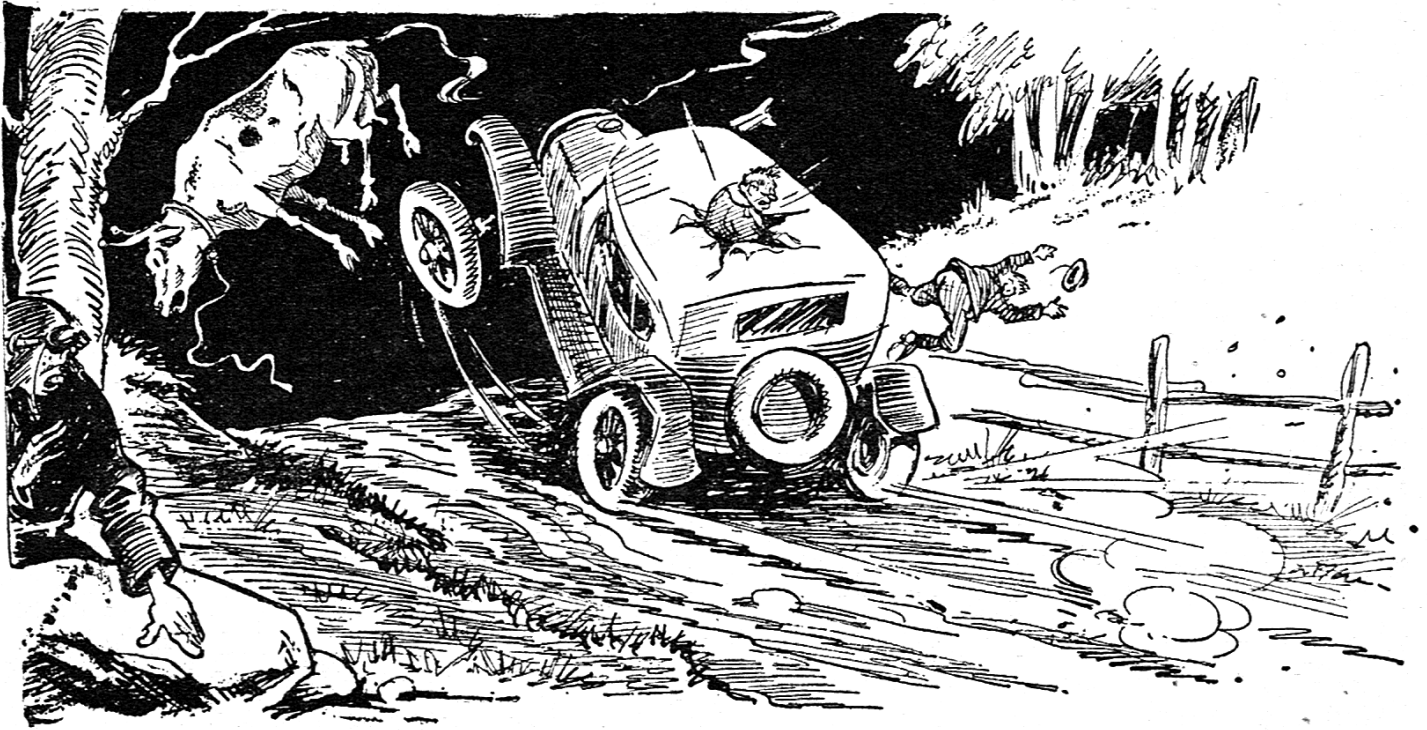
It did not take long for his gray matter to start simmering and the result was productive of an agreeable change in the expression of the Pinkham map. A broad grin spread his freckles into new areas as his eyes lined up a Frog animal of the genus *bos*—cow to you—which was grazing under an apple tree not a hundred yards away. To see was to act. Phineas rose and went over to make the cow's acquaintance.

"Won't gimme a ride, huh?" he mumbled, cutting the moorings of the moo specialist. "You would think I was reekin' with leper germs. Well, I'll git a ride. Come, bossy, that's a nice dame! *Allez avec moi* as you can help the Allied cause, Daisy. That's the old fight!"

The wandering Yank got the cow into the road and tied its hempen necklace to a fence rail. Then he pulled succulent tufts of herbage from the roadside and tossed it to the moo maker. Subsequently he sat down to wait. Soon the headlights of a car cut through the Frog mist around a sharp curve to be followed by the car itself. Mistress cow lifted her head briefly, blinked, then went back to her belated supper.

SQUE-E-E-E-E-EK! HONK! HO-O-ON-NK! Brakes and horn howled in unison, but the cow was adamant. Its stubborn nature brought it to disaster. The brakes of the Yankee boiler were none too good; Phineas could see that before the radiator merged with the cow's empennage. The U.S. boiler swerved into the ditch, spilling its human cargo all over the soil of Sunny France, and the moo cow took a brief trip through the air and came to grief against the rail fence. Phineas then saw two men pick themselves up and start running.

"Beat it, Butch," yelled one. "What a break!"



Our hero having observed the meeting of car and beef strolled over to where three more Yankee patriots were crawling about on their hands and knees. He picked up a bulky object that proved to be a trenchcoat tied up in a bundle. In the light from the headlamp of the wrecked machine Phineas spotted something protruding from the cloth. It was a bank note—a Kraut bank note. The Boonetown hero's heart started thumping as he kicked the bundle of cloth out of sight into the bushes alongside of the sunken road. Then he turned his attention to helping a man to his feet—a fellow who wore the brassard of an M.P.

"What happened?" Phineas gulped as if he did not know. "Boys, them Frog *vaches* are tough when you nudge 'em, ain't they?"

The groggy M.P. was still speechless, but a stentorous voice behind Phineas made the miracle man's big ears flap. "You, damn it! You with the fan ears! That cow was tied there—and, by gad, if you deliberately—"

"H-huh?" Phineas interrupted innocently. "You must still be gaga. Where would I git a cow? That is plain silly. I was walkin' along lookin' for a street car an'—tryin' to blame me, huh? Well—"

"You know what?" the brass hat trumpeted. "Those two doughs escaped. We caught 'em red-handed with a pile of marks. We—where are the marks? Start searching for—oh-h-h—if we've lost the evidence, too, we—"

"What a shame!" Phineas exclaimed sympathetically. "Tsk! ts!" The red tab and the two Yankee doughs hunted all over the road, but somehow they overlooked the depression in Frog real estate where Phineas had kicked the bundle. But Garrity's chief pain-in-the-neck cultivated a crop of goose pimples when an M.P. drew close to the hiding place.

"You're still cold, haw-w-w-w!" the culprit stuttered. "Er—ah—I mean it is cold of a night here in France, ain't it fellers?"

"They must've got away with 'em again," the brass hat groaned when he gave up the search and leaned against the fence in despair. "We'll get busted for this. You're an aviator, huh? Well, I bet you're a spy. An aviator with no plane, huh?"

"If you saw an Eskimo in Paree," Phineas snorted, "you would say he was a fake if he wasn't draggin' his igloo behind him, huh? I will demand satisfaction for this. Nobody can accuse an officer of the Ninth Pursuit Squadron of such a crime. It is a fine kettle of smelts, you drivin' around with no brakes. You have destroyed Frog property!" he added severely.

"Somethin's rotten here," the brass hat spouted. "I only wish I could put my finger on what it is. Come on, men, we've got to get a lift somewhere."

"I been tryin' for hours," Phineas cracked. "But look! Just in time! Here comes a great big truck. We'll get a ride or wreck the—ugh— Haw-w-w-w! It is a big truck, huh?"

The truck driver told the stranded ones that he was on his way to Commercy. The brass hat, climbing aboard along with the growling M.P.'s, gave a hint or two of his affiliation with U.S. Intelligence and nodded with satisfaction. Commercy was on the way to Chaumont. Phineas, however, waxed indignant.

"That is out of my way! What am I goin' to do, huh?"

"Now ain't that jus' too bad, Lootenant," the burly dough behind the wheel sopranoed. "Just sit down by the road, make a wish, an' Cinderella'll be along with her coach an'—"

"Fresh bum, huh?" the intrepid Yank bridled. "Gimme your name as I am a superior officer and you can't insult me an' get away with it."

"Marmaduke Q. Windermere," the dough trilled. "Tooti frutti, ol' custard!" And the truck lumbered away. Phineas could hear the brass hat mumbling and swearing until it was out of sight.

The Pride of the Ninth then waited ten minutes before he retired to the bushes to pick up the evidence of Yankee dough connivery. Then he climbed over the fence with the bundle and made his way across the pasture to where an old dead sycamore tree stood. Before depositing the coat in a yawning hole in the tree's ancient trunk, he made sure that it contained the legal tender that was to have sent two financial geniuses to the hoosegow. Yes, his exploring fingers told him, there was plenty of pay paper stuffed inside that trenchcoat!

THIRTY-SIX hours later Lieutenant Pinkham dropped off a truck near the drome of the Ninth and limped, sore of foot and weary, past a sentry on the edge of the tarmac. The Boonetown exponent of skulduggery had bundled up his flying coat and was carrying it via stick, hobo fashion.

"Huh," grunted the human watch dog, "so it's you, sir? We was hopin'—er—I mean we figured you must of 'went west.' They was about ready to bury your trunk an' things, the officers was. They said it would do 'stead of a stiff."

"You're a liar," Phineas grinned and kept on walking. He trudged to his hut and tossed his flying coat on his cot. Then he flopped down beside it, wishing that he could get fifty cents worth of good old U.S. ice on which to set his burning dogs.

Bump Gillis nosed in a few minutes' later and eyed the prodigal crookedly.

"Hello, Rothschild," the sturdy Scot began. "Where'd you hide the dough, huh?"

"What dough, huh?" Phineas countered. "What's the idea anyway? I s'pose a bank in Paree has been held up an' they blame me. I don't know what it is you are talkin' about."

"The Old Man will enlighten you, Carbuncle," Bump said with a superior air. "He has been waiting for you to show up. Did you by any chance take a detour around the Alps?" Then Bump ducked as Phineas gathered strength to swing his fist.

Five minutes later an orderly knocked and asked Phineas Pinkham to step over to see Major Garrity for a couple of minutes. The Iowa wonder went to the Operations office and reported that he had come back.

"Don't remind me of it," the Old Man exploded. "How is the big financial wizard, huh?"

"The wha-a-a-a-a?" Phineas gulped. "What's all the— Why hello, Colonel. You get around, don't you, haw-w-w-wr? You still think I stole them marks when you hit the cow with the jilopi, huh? By the way, the Frog is goin' to sue you, as after you left me he come along an' said the *vache* had a pedigree longer than—er—"

"Search his hut!" Colonel McWhinney of the U.S. Intelligence stormed. "I know he stole those marks, Major. That cow was tied up to a fence when we hit it. It was eatin' grass in the middle of the road. Whoever saw grass growing in the middle of a road over here the way those trucks have been pounding them the last two years? Lieutenant Pinkham, I demand that you give up the marks."

"Don't make me laugh, as when I cracked up I split my lip," Phineas pleaded. "I never heard nothin' so silly. Humph!"

But Colonel McWhinney persisted, so the Pinkham hut was searched minutely. An M.P. unwrapped the Pinkham flying coat, then barged out yelling bloody murder and begging some one to unhinge a snapping turtle from his thumb.

"That gives me another idea," Phineas mumbled as he watched the M.P. dive into the medico's shack.

Colonel McWhinney finally headed out of the drome. Nevertheless, he still insisted that Lieutenant Pinkham was a crook and that he would catch up with him if it took forty years after the war.

"Stubborn bum, ain't he?" Phineas remarked to the Old Man as he followed his C.O. into the Operations office. "Haw-w-w-w!"

"Pinkham," Garrity thundered, "don't try to kid me. Once there was a guy named Rothschild and he got close to the Battle of Waterloo to see how it would

come out. He planned either to buy French Louies or English pounds. Then when he saw that Wellington was going to knock Bonaparte into a cocked hat, he beat it to the Channel, hopped a boat to England, and bought up all the British money he could find. That mean anything to you, you buck-toothed simian?"

"That is a swell story, daddikins," the irrepressible Yank baby-talked. "Now tell me 'bout the barber who cut the throats of forty thieves, will ya papa? Haw-w-w-w! You believe anything, too, don't you, Major? I am gettin' so I don't think it is a joke any more. A Pinkham accused of stealin'! Why I'm as honest as they come. I never heard of—"

"Listen, halfwit!" Garrity bayed. "Ten minutes before McWhinney got here, a couple of war correspondents dropped in and said they stumbled over an old chateau where an old guy was hived up. He asked 'em did they have any marks to sell—especially the new ones that had the numbers "1½" printed on 'em. What did you sell that Frog, Pinkham? Cigar coupons or marks, huh?"

"H-huh?" Phineas tossed out, eyes wary. "What does that prove? I never heard of the old—"

"Oh no?" Garrity snorted. "Well he mentioned your name. The correspondents reported it to Lieutenant Sprinklem. And the old Frog said to tell you not to forget what you said about getting him some more marks. Look here, Pinkham, come clean. Did you tie that cow in the road? Did you sell cigar cou—?"

"I am surprised at you," Phineas countered. "You—believin' such things of me, a Pinkham. I guess you need a rest, as your dome—say, why don't you ask for three weeks off? If you don't, you will be tellin' me I am Bismarck next week. Well, I have things to attend to. Adoo, sir."

The Major ground his teeth and grew apoplectic, but that did no good so he flung a book at the wall. His eyes started out of his head and he groaned when the pages disgorged dozens of important memorandum slips that he had filed carefully inside the book for safe-keeping.

OVER in Alsace a perturbed Heinie *Herr Oberst* was conversing with the leading squarehead of Staffell 7, the Kaiser's top aerial circus. "*Ach, der Marks here vill coom in zwei maybe drei Tags, ja, Herr Hauptmann.* Already yedt *der gross* agent K-4 he *ist by der* lines ofer where *ist das Haus mit der* Marks. Yoost haff idt *der* patienze und *der* chentlemen of *der* circus vill gedt idt *der* pay. Ho! Ho! *Das ist sehr gut!* Den dey vill fly vunce again."

"*Ja? Ve safe der* laughs yedt undtil *der* Marks ve haff by *den* *Handen, Herr Oberst,*" growled the Jerry *Hauptmann.* "No more ve risk *der* necks for noddings, *mein Freund.* *Der Leutnants* dey haff idt *der* pockets embdy und dey read off *der* Cherman profit makers vot eat *der sauerbraten und* drinken vunce *der* Rhine vine und bouncing yedt *der Frauleins* by *der* knees in *der* beer gartens, bah!"

"But you vill see," the *Herr Oberst* insisted. "*Der Marks* ve vill gedt!"

FORTY-EIGHT hours after Phineas Pinkham had returned from his momentous bat patrol adventure, a new flyer reported for duty at the drome of the Ninth Pursuit Squadron. He announced to Major Rufus Garrity that Lieutenant Clarence Devine was reporting for duty. A few moments after that formality was dispensed with, the C.O. brought the newcomer to the mess to introduce him around. When he shoved out his hand toward Phineas his overly-handsome pan lighted up like that of a cat that spots a mouse slowed up by arthritis. But the smile did not fool Phineas one iota. He held out his own hand and Devine gripped it. The next second the newcomer started to yowl and began to imitate a man who has pulled on a pair of pants filled with angry hornets.

"Haw-w-w-w-w!" Phineas erupted. "It's only a buzzer, Clarence. Sit down an' manjay. That's Frog language for puttin' on the nose bag."

"I don't like your face, Pinkham!" Clarence Devine snorted. "I don't like anything about you."

"Well, I ain't exactly been standin' here plannin' to kiss you, either," the scion of the Pinkhams retorted. "Huh, you ain't got no sense of humor, Clarence."

"That's enough out of you!" Garrity roared at him. "Lieutenant, pay no attention to Pinkham. You're here to fly—"

"If you can make a pilot out of that nasturtium," Phineas sneered elaborately, "then you could knit a doily with barbed-wire an' a couple of crowbars. Haw-w-w-w!"

Thereupon, Clarence and Phineas reached for each other, and it took the combined efforts of Captain Howell, Lieutenant Gillis, and a few other pilots, to keep the two from a fist fest. Finally, the wonder man from Iowa stepped toward the door. "Won't let us fight, huh? It's gittin' to be a sissy squadron, if you ask me. I'll see you around, though, won't I, Clarence?" he called back over his shoulder. "You're simply gor-r-rge-eous. Adoo for now."

Lieutenant Pinkham then went to his Nissan hut to think things over. He knew as well as he knew his mother's first name that Clarence Devine had been sent to Bar-le-Duc by the Intelligence Corps. Clarence would keep his eyes on Lieutenant Pinkham on the ground and in the air. This was a pretty pickle, Phineas decided, what with an old Frog citizen near Souilly ready to pay plenty of francs for a bundle of marks.

The Boonetown magician taxed his mental equipment to the limit and finally gleaned an idea from its whirring mechanism. Inside of half an hour he was on a motorcycle en route to Bar-le-Duc. When he arrived in the Frog metropolis, he parked the machine in an areaway and waited in the dark.

Ten minutes later the squadron car pulled up in front of an *estaminet* that was well patronized by members of the Ninth. Out of the car tumbled three pilots, one of them Clarence Devine. Phineas strolled out into the light and, whistling a popular air, minced toward the domicile of his light of love, Babette.

Once closeted with his fair lady, Phineas asked if rats had been prevalent in her cellar of late. Babette admitted that they had.

"Oui, Pheenyas, beegair an' beegair zey get lak les chats. Zey chase ze what you call tommychat out from ze maison. I have eet ze very beeg strong traps, *aussi*."

"That is all I want to know, cherry," Phineas grinned, giving her a bunny hug. "I want to borrow one of ze rat traps, comprenny? That is trez good, Babette," he said as she handed him the spring steel device. "And now if voose *avez* ze grub, I weel man jay. See swar at the mess I lost ze appetite, *oui*."

An hour later Phineas emerged from Babette's house. Twenty minutes after that Clarence and a couple of M.P.'s searched the place. Lieutenant Devine burst forth with a scratched prop boss and a lump on his noggin as big as a croquet ball. But he had no other

marks. Meanwhile Phineas Pinkham was out beyond Bar-le-Duc in a sheep pasture that he had often used as an emergency landing field. He was busily occupied near a hollow tree for fully fifteen minutes.

Then on the way back to the drome he passed the squadron car which was standing beside the road with a flat tire.

"Bong sour, boys!" Phineas tossed out cheerily in passing. "How was Babette's throwing arm, huh, Clarence? Two flat tires!"

OF COURSE the war had to go on despite the quest of the missing Jerry marks. All the next day the Ninth Pursuit went about its chores in the ozone over

Europe and were elated with results. Up to four in the afternoon Garrity's outfit had knocked off three Drachen hot air weenies, a Rumpier, two Fokkers, and an Albatros. Flight leaders reported to Garrity that *Hauptmann* von Katzenjammer's circus was still among the missing and that fact had made the going easy.

Still the Old Man could not believe that the Jerry Wing had been cockeyed enough to withdraw the *Hauptmann* from the sector just when he had been demoralizing Allied winged stock.

However, rumors that the Kaiser's bankroll was getting flatter than a Scotch pancake had

been whispered along the front for days. Perhaps the *Hauptmann* and his outfit had gone on strike.

Phineas Pinkham waited impatiently for the dusk patrol. And Lieutenant Clarence Devine had been gnawing his nails to the quick, although he was not scheduled for the sweep-up hop of the day. He stood near the ammo shack idly smoking a cigarette as Captain Howell, Phineas, and Bump climbed into their respective battle wagons. When the Pinkham Spad with its galloping dominoes insignia kissed the tarmac goodbye, Clarence hopped away in search of



the Equipment Officer. Astride a mechanical bug, he rode toward Bar-le-Duc muttering: "Smart guy, huh? I'll show that speckled baboon I can read his mind. Got a landing field, has he? Engine trouble when he wants it, huh? I'll have him booked for Leavenworth in ten days!"

Now Howell and his flyers spotted scant few of enemy aircraft on their last jaunt of the day. The one two-seater that they did spot was high-tailing it toward Potsdam. Phineas thanked the Boche in the rear pit for shooting at them with his Spandaus although a half mile separated the Rumpler from the Spads. Near Bar-le-Duc he threw the Spad into a sort of fit as if a bullet had nudged its vitals. He dropped out of formation and slid down toward the carpet.

"That wise guy!" Howell roared. "If that Boche lead hit him, then traffic whistles in London scare the kangaroos in Australia. He's faking. Wait until I tell the Major. I'm still boss of this flight. That's twenty times he's ducked out on me since—I'll burn his pants!"

Lieutenant Pinkham rolled to a neat landing in the pasture outside of Bar-le-Duc, got out of the Spad, and looked about cautiously. Satisfied, he taxied over to the hollow tree and plunged a hand inside.

But suddenly a triumphant, gloating voice rang out.

"Got you, Pinkham! You're covered! Ha! Thought you could fool me, did you? I'm Lieutenant Devine—of the Intelligence Corps. Step back and keep your hands up."

"Why if it ain't Clarence," Phineas said, feigning frustration. "You sure are some detective. Well, you're the better man an'—well, a Pinkham will admit when he's licked, haw-w-w-w!"

Lieutenant Devine shoved a hand into the hollow tree—and there came a sound like a sabre tooth tiger's teeth banging together. Clarence leaped off the ground and hollered like a wolf with a toothache.

"Ha-a-a-alp! Somethin'—bit—me! Ha-a-alp! It won't let go! Ow-w-w-w-w-w! Halp!"

Phineas saluted jauntily. "Good evenin'. I bet you will get awful tired of that tree durin' the night, Clarence, ol' thing. But don't feel too bad; lots of bums have tried to match wits with a Pinkham—to their sorrow, haw-w-w-w! If you are Sherlock Holmes, I can milk turtles!"

Having rid himself of a nuisance, Phineas climbed into his sky wagon and pointed its prop boss toward Souilly as soon as he had lifted it out of the clutches of the law of gravity. The job of picking out a landmark near the old chateau taxed the avigating acumen of

the miracle man of the Ninth. But he finally sighted an adjacent cow pasture. Then after landing Phineas walked cautiously to the location of his cache and plunged a hand into the hole in the sycamore tree where he had deposited the Heinie legal tender. He pulled out something that certainly was not a trench coat. The fabric was much too smooth to the touch and it seemed to have no end—like colored handkerchiefs being hauled out of a magician's sleeve. There were ropes tied to it and when the Boonetown sleight of hand performer had finally brought all of it to light, he knew that he was looking at a parachute.

"Huh," he grunted, "a Boche has dropped in an' I ain't got a cake baked. What is he after, huh? What was it I heard about Heinie Staffels not getting paid and threatening to quit the *guerre*? Hm-m-m—let's see now. Haw-w-w-w, that is what the spy-droppin' was for. To get some marks as they have heard about old Bouillon, too. Now if Clarence was watchin' me, I am sure McWhinney is not blindfolded, either'. It is a tough game bein' a financier. I bet I'll be jumped on before I get close to that old Frog."

The errant flyer bundled up the chute, crammed it back into the tree, and moved away. Intuition hit him and he saw a way out. A parachute had come down—but nobody had made one that could take off, he ruminated. A Boche was looking for a chance to get off Allied soil and he must be somewhere about. It was now quite dark and Yankee bat flyers were up doing their stuff. As Phineas retired to a thicket nearby, a searchlight from the front began to sweep the nocturnal ozone with a spear of artificial light. And the sound of bursting shrapnel reached the Pinkham ears while he was hacking at shrubbery with a big jackknife.

In ambush near the chateau Colonel McWhinney and two M.P.'s were licking their chops. "That was Pinkham, I'll bet my pants," the brass hat clipped. "We'll let him get into the chateau—and then hop him! We'll get him so cold he'll have chilblains. Fool with me, will he?"

BETWEEN the chateau and the spot where Phineas was exercising skulduggery a Kraut was lurking. He, too, had heard the Spad and had poked his bullet-like head out from under cover to watch its fiery exhaust settle closer and closer to the ground. Near his elbow rested a big bundle of Jerry marks. And back in the chateau an ancient Frog was bound and gagged, his beard tied to a chair leg.

"*Gott sie danke*," the Kraut guttured. "Oudt

mit der Spadt I will go.” He began to crawl forward cautiously.

Phineas was standing on the Spad stirrup placing something in the pit. Once he yelped and put his thumb into his mouth and bit down hard. Then he jumped down and walked away from the battle wagon. Its prop idled lazily as Lieutenant Pinkham sauntered aimlessly toward the road where a U.S. boiler still lay in a ditch quite defunct. No sooner had he climbed the fence when K-4, Potsdam snooper, reached the Yankee air bus and hurriedly tied a package to a strut. Then the Junker scrambled aboard and settled heavily into the pit.

“Ow-w-w-w-w-w! Gott! Rimmitt Donnervetter!”

Phineas ran back toward the Spad as the howls assailed the air. “Haw-w-w-w-w-w!” he guffawed. “Blackthorn is the spikiest stuff that grows. I bet he’s stuck up worse than an Astorbilt. Boys, have I got intuition like dames!”

Colonel McWhinney yipped: “Come on! Somebody beat us to it. They’ve nabbed Pinkham. Come on, men. Maybe Devine followed him. Hurry up and get into that car, you dumb—!”

K-4, jabbed in a dozen spots on his empennage, tumbled out of the Spad and hopped around in circles. His painful ululations could be heard halfway to Chaumont.

“Wee gates!” Phineas chortled. “How *ist der* tail assembly, eh? Don’t make a move, Heinie, or idt giffs *der*—” He brandished a fence stake and, since K-4 could not stop moving, Phineas caressed his noggin. The Prussian folded up like a campstool and the Boonetown conniver promptly sat on him. He was nonchalantly smoking a cigarette when McWhinney and his A.E.F. cops came over the rise from the sunken road puffing like wheezy engines.

“What kept you?” Phineas inquired with a grin. “Where have all you big policemen been while this Kraut was stealing the old Frog’s marks? They are right on the wing there. It looks like it always takes a Pinkham to get Chaumont out of a mess.”

“Well—why—you’ve got a spy there!” McWhinney whinnied.

“It ain’t no boy scout,” Phineas countered. “Load him into that car an’ take the marks, Colonel. You can see that them doughs who escaped that night must’ve come back when we was gone an’ got the marks to the Frog. An’ then the Heinie come along an’ lifted ’em along with a lot more. I bet there’s a hundred thousand marks in that package. Well, let’s get goin’. We got to see what happened to Bouillon, monsoors.”

THREE hours later a mud-bespattered machine lurched into the drome of the Ninth Pursuit Squadron and pulled up in front of headquarters. Old Man Garrity and Captain Howell were standing on the tarmac looking up at a Spad that had been circling overhead for fully fifteen minutes. Sergeant Casey kept ackemmas burning petrol flares on the ground while he jumped up and down and waved his fist at what they were sure was the Pinkham Spad.

“Why don’t the big lug land, huh? Come down, you bat-eared bum, or we’ll let you feel your way in from memory. What ails that fathead?”

“I’ve been trying to figure that out for years!” the Old Man snorted. Turning, he legged it to where five men were unloading themselves from the khaki-hued jilopi. They were Colonel McWhinney, a gesticulating old Frog with a white beard, a Boche spy, and two M.P.’s. The Spad now nosed in for a landing, nearly sideswiped two trees, then rolled the length of a snaky rope of flare fire.

“One of my ailerons was jammed,” he yipped, covering up the fact that he wanted to be sure McWhinney had arrived before he landed. “An’ I’ll bet you wanted to hog all the credit for capturing that Boche, huh, Colonel? Haw-w-w-w! Well, here I am with the marks.” And he tossed the bundle of Boche legal tender at Garrity’s feet and struck a defiant pose.

“Uh—er—yes, Major, he caught the Boche,” the brass hat gulped. “I—er—can’t seem to figure it out—how he knew the man was there—er—put thorns in the Spad and—er let’s go inside and think things out.”

“Oh, it’s simple,” Phineas said airily. “Even to the Intelligence Corps. But they nearly messed up everything. Clarence Devine chasin’ me like that, huh! I had to—er—I was on the spy’s trail ever since that night—er—I got the cow—the cow got in front of the Colonel’s buggy. I says to myself, what would I do if I was a spy an’ nobody could get to me to pick me up? So I did what I thought I would do if I was K-4. Why, I would look for an Allied crate. That’s what the Boche spy did, and I left the Spad where he could take it—even left the prop turnin’ over’ for him. K-4 made a mistake, though, haw-w-w-w! He should have looked the gift horse in the mouth, as it was lined with them spiky—”

Colonel McWhinney shook his head and muttered: “Somebody get me a drink.”

“Yeah,” Phineas went on, chuckling, “Clarence was an awful nuisance and I had to put him where he would be *hors de combat*. Babette has rats in her cellar.”

"Now whatinell has that got to do with gettin' this Boche?" Garrity hollered, jumping up and down with exasperation. "Rats—"

"They catch 'em with traps big enough to hold a woodchuck," Phineas replied blandly. "I put one in a hollow tree where Clarence thought I'd hid the marks I—the marks they said I stole. Huh, accusin' me of—Colonel, you did not do so good, either. You lost those doughs an' the swag, an' you was hidin' out in the woods near the chateau while a Kraut was assaultin' an' robbin' a Frog taxpayer. Say, what is it you have to know to be in the Intelligence? Haw-w-w-w!"

"I will not stay here to be insulted!" the brass hat spouted indignantly. "No, I won't."

"Well, who's holdin' you down?" the professor of skulduggery, ledger-demain, prestidigitation, and just plain practical joking, inquired, quite sure of his ground. "And you'd better send somebody out to get Clarence toot sweet, as he must be cramped where he is, Major. I bet you want to know why I knew he was

in the A.E.F. police force, too, huh? Well, it was because he looked so dumb. Also when he got into a Spad he wiped off the bucket seat first. And once I saw him try to spin it like it was a swivel chair. Haw-w-w! What a *guerre!*"

"I weel see ze preseedant of all ze Franch!" old Jacques Bouillon sputtered. "I know ze rights. Remembair Lafayette *et* Jean d'Arc. Ze satees-fac-se-on from Robespierre!"

"He forgot Madame DuBarry," Phineas grinned. "He's got cuckoos in his belfry. I would let him go, if I was you bums—er, officers—as if he takes things to court, Chaumont will find out the things that I am willing to overlook if I am not persecuted any longer, haw-w-w! Cheer up, Colonel, as you will maybe make your mark some day. Boys, I am full of 'em, see swar, huh?"

"Let me out of here!" Colonel McWhinney snorted. "Let me through there, gentlemen!"

"But don't forget Clarence," Phineas trilled.